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Chairman: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mr. Dhital (Nepal): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I would like to extend our hearty congratulations to you on your well-deserved election and to the other members of the Bureau on their elections. I am confident that you will steer the Commission's work to a successful conclusion.

I take this opportunity to welcome the newly appointed Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka, and would like to thank him for his comprehensive opening remarks.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We are concerned over the slow progress in nuclear disarmament. However, we are pleased to note that this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is taking place after agreement was reached on its agenda, including among other items, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". We believe that the deliberations of member States will generate momentum and intensify efforts towards the adoption of multilateral measures for disarmament, verification of compliance and the establishment of new norms and standards.

Nepal values multilateral negotiations in disarmament and non-proliferation that ensure transparency and accountability. It is a party to various multilateral treaties and agreements, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). My delegation encourages the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and supports the necessary measures for preventing non-State actors from acquiring more lethal small arms and light weapons. The increased use of such weapons by non-State actors has threatened peace, security and the economic and social stability of nations, particularly small ones.

The delegation of Nepal firmly believes that until and unless the international community creates an environment in which nuclear weapons can be eliminated once and for all, there will always be an incentive to produce nuclear weapons in order to gain entry into the club of powerful nuclear States. That is why we should gear our efforts towards eliminating nuclear weapons from the world.

We believe that confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms could play a significant role in creating an environment conducive to achieving the broader objective of international cooperation in arms control and disarmament. Such measures should take into consideration the particular political and military conditions prevailing in each respective region.

My delegation commends the efforts of the United Nations towards reducing and eventually

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eliminating nuclear weapons, destroying chemical weapons and enhancing the prohibition of biological weapons. Nepal reiterates its commitment to achieving the goal of general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. We call for a truly global effort towards achieving the noble goal of general disarmament and non-proliferation in order to ensure peace, justice and security for all mankind.

Regional mechanisms could contribute to strengthening confidence-building measures and implementing various multilateral instruments on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. In that respect, I would like to reiterate the commitment of His Majesty's Government of Nepal to relocate the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific to Kathmandu within six months of the signing of the host country agreement with the Secretariat and following the completion of necessary formalities. My delegation eagerly awaits a draft agreement from the Secretariat.

In conclusion, disarmament, regulation of armaments and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction would be in the interest of all mankind. We must undertake the necessary efforts to achieve general disarmament and non-proliferation under the auspices of the United Nations. Let us rededicate our efforts to strengthening international peace and security.

Mrs. Taylor Roberts (Jamaica): My delegation congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your elections to guide the deliberations of the Commission. You can be assured of the cooperation of the delegation of Jamaica in the discharge of your duties.

We welcome Ambassador Nobuaki Tanaka, the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and wish him well in his new assignment. We also thank Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone, immediate past Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, for his contribution to reviving the work of the Commission.

Jamaica fully supports the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, but wishes to make the following additional remarks from a national perspective.

The challenges we have faced, particularly in recent times, in connection with achieving the objectives of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, the increased anxiety about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the possibility that those weapons could end up in the hands of terrorists and other persons make the deliberations of this Commission of keen importance and relevance to the disarmament agenda. The existing general international unease and insecurity is further reinforced by a prevailing sense that the principles of multilateralism are under threat, coupled with the evident retreat from previously agreed international commitments and obligations. Rather than a seeking to adhere to international obligations to curtail the spread of nuclear weapons, there are instead new justifications and rationales for the maintenance and development of nuclear weapons. That is disturbing.

As a State dependent upon the effective role of the multilateral system in securing a stable and peaceful environment through the removal of threats to international peace and the full implementation of multilateral agreements and commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation, we welcome the opportunity provided by the resumption of the substantive work of the Commission to engage in meaningful deliberation on the way forward and in establishing, promoting and elaborating global norms on disarmament through discussions on the two main agenda items, namely, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons".

Recent setbacks may prompt us to agree that there is a need to be forward-looking and open to innovative ideas in effecting change in the disarmament agenda. Such a quest, however, should not be at the expense of previously agreed instruments and disarmament obligations. Our approach needs to be based on a firm commitment to multilateralism underpinned by strong political will. In this case, rather than ambition being tempered by realism, there is a need to be cognizant of the grim reality facing all of us with the continued existence of nuclear weapons.

It is critical that the nuclear-weapon States fulfil their obligations under multilateral instruments, in particular under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). There should

also adherence to previously agreed commitments, including the 13 practical steps, and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Unless commitments are fully respected and honoured, there will be no progress in reaching non-proliferation goals.

It is also clear that the strengthening of confidence in the area of international security will be dependent upon the absence of discriminatory or selective application of the norms and regulations governing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The careful balance of rights and obligations enshrined in the NPT also needs to be respected and adhered to, including the rights of NPT States parties under article IV.

Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons are of interest to Jamaica, particularly due to the undisputed role of those weapons in creating the conditions for, and in worsening, conflicts and instability, including the consequent effect on international peace and security. The relative ease of access to, and the portability of, conventional weapons have posed security dilemmas for many States and have had to be juxtaposed against the relative right of States to defend themselves. Unfortunately, such considerations have come at the expense of human life and have led to untold suffering. That underscores the importance of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons as an integral component in furthering disarmament and in the prevention of war.

The increased security that is obtained through transparency, openness and accountability in military matters does much to enhance international stability and to reduce unwanted military tensions. We can support the proposal that we should use the Chairman's consolidated working paper as contained in the 2003 report of the Disarmament Commission (A/58/42) as a basis for further deliberation on these matters while taking into account those new developments, including other multilateral and regional initiatives, which will add value to our work.

Allow me to state in conclusion that Jamaica remains committed to the aims and objectives of the Commission as the universal, specialized, deliberative body within the United Nations mandated to undertake detailed examination of specific disarmament issues for consideration by the General Assembly. We hope that this year's substantive session will allow for constructive engagement on the issues, build on consensus and begin the process of developing guidelines and formulating concrete recommendations on the two main agenda items that will be the focus of our attention for the next three years. We are open to discussion on measures to improve the effectiveness of our methods of work, and consider that such discussions should not be merely procedural in nature but involve other ideas, including an assessment of the processes of decision-making. In any event, the overall objective of that exercise should be the strengthening of the work of the Commission so as to further the goal of disarmament.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the current session of the Disarmament Commission, an important body that is dear to the broad membership of the Organization. I am sure that, under your skilful stewardship, we will be able to have a smooth and successful session.

I would also like to welcome Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, the newly appointed Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and to wish him success. My delegation will not hesitate to continue its cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs during Mr. Tanaka's tenure.

I should like to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

After two years of deadlock over the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, we are glad that this year the Commission has a substantive agenda, including an item on nuclear disarmament, to be considered for three years. That provides us with a very good opportunity to express our views on the noble goal of nuclear disarmament, whose achievement the international community has awaited for more than three decades. It also offers us a chance to reflect on the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and to work on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects.

The continued existence in the stockpiles of nuclear-weapon States of thousands of nuclear warheads, which could destroy the entire globe many times over, and the increasing resort to threats of their

possible use are the major sources of concern with regard to global peace and security. The international community has the right to be assured that the nightmare visited upon the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never happen again.

Regrettably, the limited efforts of the major nuclear-weapon States to reduce their arsenals since the cold war have faced serious setbacks, particularly in recent years. Nuclear weapons continue to be deployed in non-nuclear-weapon countries as a part of the coalition of a certain group of States, a fact that exacerbates an already tense situation. Furthermore, concerns remain over research on and the development of new non-strategic, low-yield, easy-to-use nuclear weapons, coupled with the daily threat of their probable use against non-nuclear-weapon States, even in conventional combat.

Unfortunately, a serious attempt has been made to undermine the obligations agreed upon by consensus at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Non-nuclear weapon States, despite the difficulties that the non-proliferation regime had historically faced, generally determined that the NPT had been successful in containing the number of nuclear-weapon States and therefore, in 1995, agreed on a package of decisions aimed at allowing an indefinite extension of the NPT.

The consensual final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference reaffirmed those obligations and set out a plan of action in the form of 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement nuclear disarmament. As a follow-up to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, States parties to the Treaty decided to call upon Israel by name to accede to the NPT and to place all its clandestine nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with a view to realizing the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the 2000 NPT Conference, while reaffirming that the IAEA has to be the sole competent authority responsible for ensuring the peaceful application of nuclear energy, reconfirmed the undertakings by all parties to the Treaty to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy among States parties.

Since the 2000 NPT Review Conference, however, a trend of denials has compounded the previous rejection of the inalienable right of States parties to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Certain nuclear-weapon States first rejected the unequivocal undertakings by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals with a view to the achievement of nuclear disarmament and later even claimed that obligations under article VI do not exist at all. As a result of that policy, the 2005 NPT Review Conference ended without any substantive outcome. Soon after that, the United Nations world summit failed to include a section on disarmament in its outcome document (resolution 60/1) owing to the rejection of any reference to nuclear disarmament. The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/72, which was submitted by my country, the Islamic Republic of Iran, expressed its grave concern over the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and urged the States parties to the NPT to follow up on the implementation of nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty agreed to at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences.

The adoption of the agenda items for the 2006 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, including one on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, has created a good opportunity to revive the nuclear disarmament process. The Disarmament Commission, as a specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, should have an in-depth discussion on the most important and urgent issue in the field of disarmament, namely, nuclear disarmament. In our view, the Commission can make concrete recommendations, if the political will exists, for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

In considering the nuclear disarmament issue, priority should be given to security assurances. In recent decades, non-nuclear-weapon States have been under threat by a high risk of the possible use of nuclear weapons. The lack of progress in the field of nuclear disarmament, coupled with the recently stated positions regarding the possible use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, has created a fragile international environment in which the national security of non-nuclear-weapon States is in

deep jeopardy. All promises given by nuclear-weapon States concerning their readiness to negotiate on a legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat of use or the use of nuclear weapons have turned out to be empty undertakings, thus contributing to mistrust among members of the international community.

We are of the firm belief that at this stage, together with our efforts to explore ways and means to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we should make simultaneous efforts to conclude a legally binding instrument against the use of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the Commission is the appropriate forum in which to take up this issue and make specific recommendations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually reinforcing. Iran, as the initiator of the proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, fully supports genuine efforts to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Iran was among the first countries that ratified the NPT and concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA, thereby putting its facilities under the Agency's supervision. Iran's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to the Biological Weapons Convention and our signing of the Comprehensive-Test-Ban Treaty are indicative of our resolve to adhere to the objective of non-proliferation.

We are of the view that the best way of ensuring the non-proliferation of WMDs is the full and non-selective implementation of those treaties and the transparency measures provided by those instruments, as well as the promotion of their universality. A double-standard approach rewarding non-parties and setting arbitrary thresholds would only undermine the credibility of disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

In our view, efforts directed towards non-proliferation should be made in parallel with simultaneous efforts aimed at disarmament. The strengthening of these two concepts together would serve us well in securing a world that is free from weapons of mass destruction. Attaining the universality of non-proliferation and disarmament treaties, in particular the NPT, is essential in order for the international community to be safe and free.

Furthermore, the integrity and durability of an international regime such as the NPT is solely dependent on the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all its provisions. As a member State of the Non-Aligned Movement, we share the view that

> "the NPT is a key instrument in efforts to halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and an essential foundation for nuclear disarmament." *(See A/CN.10/PV.269)*

Non-nuclear-weapon States renounced the nuclear option and pledged to fulfil their commitments, provided that they would be able to exercise their inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination or arbitrary thresholds.

Nuclear-weapon States are also bound by certain obligations under different provisions of the Treaty, including article IV, on facilitating, not restricting, the peaceful application of nuclear technology; article VI on nuclear disarmament; article III, paragraph 2, on refraining from the transfer of sensitive technology and materials to non-parties to the Treaty; and article I, on the non-transfer to any recipient whatsoever of nuclear weapons or control over such weapons.

The importance of these obligations requires the Commission to reflect them in all its recommendations.

I wish to emphasize that our commitment to the NPT is unqualified. Iran renounced nuclear weapons not only because of its contractual obligations under the NPT, but also due to its historical background and religious edicts. As a State party to the NPT, Iran insists on its inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology and will not accept any arbitrary threshold, as it has gone out of its way to address any genuine concern about the exclusively peaceful nature of its programme.

I cannot conclude this statement, Mr. Chairman, without assuring you of our continued full commitment to the provisions of the NPT and cooperation with the IAEA. We are also willing and prepared to engage in serious negotiations with interested parties to find an acceptable solution to the current situation.

Miss Majali (Jordan): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission and also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the chairmen of the Working Groups. I wish also to assure you, and them, of my delegation's

full support and cooperation. My delegation is confident that, using your experience and skill, you will spare no effort in trying to bring about a successful outcome of this meeting.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Tanaka, the new Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and to wish him success in his new assignment and endeavours while assuring him of our full support and cooperation. That said, my delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf on the Non-Aligned Movement, to which it fully subscribes.

The importance of this 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission should not be minimized, since we are meeting in the wake of not only the numerous setbacks we have recently faced in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation — namely, the failure of the last Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the failure of the 2005 world summit to make any reference to disarmament and non-proliferation in its outcome document, and the now nearly 10-year deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament — but also the difficulties that the Commission itself has faced in the past few years, whether with regard to its inability to reach consensus on specific guidelines or proposals in its previous sessions or to its failure to agree on substantive agenda items for three consecutive years.

My delegation is therefore pleased that the Disarmament Commission has been able to resume its work. It also hopes that the Commission, as it deliberates on the two agenda items before it, will be able to reach consensus on substantive recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

As for the discussions we will be having on improving the Commission's methods of work, my delegation, while it is ready to engage constructively in the deliberations that will be taking place, remains of the view that efforts to improve the Commission's methods of work should be seen as an integral part of the revitalization of the General Assembly as a whole. Moreover, since the Disarmament Commission, as a specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, has succeeded in previous years in allowing for deliberations on specific disarmament issues, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly at numerous sessions, most recently in 1999, and has greatly contributed towards the emergence of global disarmament norms, my delegation hopes that discussions in this regard will lead to a further reaffirmation of, and support for, its purposes and principles, thus allowing it once again to resume its efforts to fulfil its important mandate.

In working to address the first substantive agenda item, entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" — an issue of the highest importance given the fact that progress towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential to strengthening international peace and security — my delegation believes that the following important issues, among others, should be kept in mind as we work on drafting our recommendations.

First, the vision and the principles contained in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly remain relevant. Within that framework, Member States should both fulfil their obligations in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and continue their multilateral efforts towards achieving nuclear disarmament under effective international control and strengthening the international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes.

Secondly, the NPT, which rests on three pillars, remains the key instrument in our efforts to halt the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. In that regard, balanced and non-selective implementation of the NPT and the strict implementation of all its provisions are what are needed to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Moreover, in that context, there is a need for the full implementation of, and a firm commitment by all States parties to, the package agreed to at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which comprises the three decisions and the resolution on the Middle East, as well as the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in particular with regard to the 13 practical steps for the systematic and

progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty.

Thirdly, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. However, the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament remains a matter of concern, as is the need for nuclear-weapon States to implement their unequivocal undertaking to bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Therefore, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

Fourthly, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which represents a major achievement of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, has yet to enter into force. In this respect, the negative developments with regard to the non-ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remain a matter of concern. It is hoped that States that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, especially those mentioned in annex II of the Treaty, will do so as soon as possible so that it can finally enter into force.

Fifthly, nuclear-weapon-free zones remain pivotal for maintaining the international non-proliferation regime and for consolidating international peace and security. Those that have been established in various parts of the world should therefore be welcomed and considered to be positive steps towards attaining the desired objective of nuclear disarmament. Efforts aimed at the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free-zones in all regions of the world are to be both welcomed and encouraged.

In this respect, the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region, as called for in Security Council resolution 487 (1981), relevant General Assembly resolutions and the outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, is of paramount importance. With that in mind, my delegation reiterates that Israel is the only State in the Middle East region that has refused to accede to the NPT and has chosen to preserve the nuclear option, and that its accession to the NPT would not only contribute to the universality of the Treaty but would also, at the regional level, defuse existing tensions, bring about tangible progress on other bilateral tracks of the peace process, enhance confidence-building measures between all parties and have an overall positive impact on regional peace and security. The implementation of International Atomic Energy Agency safety measures in all of its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities would furthermore prevent potential nuclear accidents and the risk of radiological contamination.

Sixthly, the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva must be overcome so as to allow for negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile material.

With respect to the agenda item on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, my delegation supports the Chairman's proposal that the Commission continue its deliberations on the Chairman's consolidated working paper, as contained in the Commission's 2003 report (A/58/42). We will be responding to and considering the proposals that will be put forward, bearing in mind that while confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms may be a way to strengthen international peace and security, they are not a substitute, nor can they be a precondition, for disarmament measures, but are additional measures that can be undertaken to help in creating an atmosphere conducive to arms control and disarmament.

With that in mind, my delegation fully concurs with the comments made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs in his statement to the Commission yesterday (see A/CN.10/PV.269) that the challenge before the Commission is to consider and adopt measures that contribute to reducing the threat to international peace and security while protecting the right of Member States to the means of self-defence. Here, my delegation would add that we must bear in mind the realities and particularities of each region.

My delegation is therefore of the view that transparency in the area of conventional weapons, like confidence-building measures in other areas, cannot be ensured in the absence of an approach that encompasses all aspects related to weapons — all types of weapons — must stem from a balanced treatment of the various elements relating to armaments and must take into account inseparable aspects such as national capacities for production and the procurement and stockpiling of weapons.

As a result, my delegation believes that, in discussions on issues such as transparency or the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the possibility of making the Register more effective as a confidence-building measure or an early-warning mechanism by broadening its scope to include all types of weapons, on a non-selective basis and in line with General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, should be seriously taken into consideration, as that would further respond to the security needs of many other States and help forge consensus on this important issue.

Finally, my delegation is looking forward to working actively with you, Mr. Chairman, and all the other members of the Commission in trying to bring about a successful outcome of the 2006 session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 2006 session, and look forward to the success of the session under your skilful chairmanship.

At the same time, I feel a sense of relief that this meeting has been made possible after two years of setbacks on the United Nations disarmament course owing to artificial obstacles.

It would be instructive for us to look back on past debates on the nuclear issues in the international arena, including within the United Nations. As we are all aware, certain nuclear-weapon States and their allies forced the debates to be conducted in terms of a conflict of values for domination of the world, rather than in terms of world peace and security to save our planet and mankind from nuclear destruction. For two years, the Disarmament Commission could not even agree on an agenda, thus failing to contribute to actual nuclear disarmament. That shows us that as long the ambition for nuclear supremacy exists, the efforts of the international community for a nuclear-free world will be in vain.

Today, military strength is being mobilized to spread democracy and freedom throughout the world, and nuclear weapons play a main role in that respect. The post-cold-war hopes for a nuclear-free world have all faded away, and threats of nuclear war have increased.

Whether we can show the world's peoples that the debate on nuclear issues in the United Nations is not hypocrisy depends entirely on the nuclear-weapon States. If the nuclear-weapon States respond positively to the calls of the non-nuclear-weapon States for an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, great progress would be made in the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are inseparably related to each other, and nuclear disarmament has priority over non-proliferation. Within the Security Council and the disarmament machinery, the United States and its allies set out nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as issues separate from each other, and insist on their odd arguments that only nuclear proliferation is a threat to international peace and security — in other words, that if proliferation were contained, there would be no nuclear threats in the world, because their nuclear weapons are not posing any threat at all.

Their insistence on non-proliferation only reflects their ulterior motive — to avoid nuclear disarmament. As long as nuclear weapons and the threat of their use exist, the logical conclusion is the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In this regard, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea considers that the nuclear doctrine of the United States is the actual obstacle to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The United States has declared the pre-emptive nuclear strike to be its security strategy; it is engrossed in developing new types of nuclear weapons and is applying dual standards in its nuclear policy based on its relations with other countries and its strategic interests. The United States nuclear doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons is a total negation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and an actual threat to world peace and security. The development of new types of nuclear weapons, the threat of pre-emptive nuclear strike and the dual standard policy would inevitably foil the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation effort and instigate a nuclear arms race.

The nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula is a direct product of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Bush Administration is pursuing its ambition of regime change by pre-emptive strike, while calling the Democratic People's Republic of Korea part of an

"axis of evil" and a "tyrannical" State. The United States has designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a target of nuclear pre-emptive strike, and has disclosed that it has made new types of nuclear weapons to attack the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In these compelling circumstances, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no choice other than to engage in nuclear deterrence to counter the ever-growing United States threat of nuclear attack. This is a reasonable exercise of our sovereign rights to defend our territory, people and social system from foreign invasion.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintains the consistent position that the Korean peninsula should be denuclearized. The Beijing Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks of September 2005 clearly stipulates the obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the principles of simultaneous action needed to fulfil them. However, the United States is demanding that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea give up its nuclear programme first, which not only contradicts reason but also shows that the United States has no interest in finding realistic ways to settle the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula.

How can the Democratic People's Republic of Korea put down arms when the United States has not abrogated its hostile policy of defining the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as "the main enemy"? How can the Democratic People's Republic of Korea dismantle its nuclear weapons first, when the United States is stepping up nuclear war exercises in preparation for a pre-emptive strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with nuclear weapons?

When the United States has a mind to coexist with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by abandoning its hostile policy towards it, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will have no need of a single nuclear weapon. The United States should refrain from setting up any further obstacles to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, but show in practical terms its will to fulfil its obligations under the Beijing Joint Statement.

Mr. Ben-Shaban (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your respective elections to the leadership of the Disarmament Commission at its 2006 substantive session. I wish you every success as you fulfil your responsibilities.

International peace and security cannot be achieved if weapons of mass destruction are allowed to go unchecked. Rather, this goal can only be achieved by strengthening the principles of dialogue, understanding and cooperation among peoples, increasing development and fighting disease and poverty. My country is committed to all of these objectives. Indeed, we demonstrated our commitment on 19 December 2003 when we foreswore all weapons of mass destruction. This initiative, which stemmed from our conviction that the arms race cannot enhance world security, has been hailed the world over on a number of occasions. Through this initiative, we want to set an example that the entire world can emulate.

My country attaches great importance to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions throughout the world. Doing so would strengthen international peace and security everywhere. Notwithstanding the international community's efforts to free the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the fact that Israel continues to possess nuclear facilities and dozens of nuclear warheads threatens peace and security, not just in the Middle East but in Europe and Asia, and throughout the world. It is a challenge flung in the face of the international community, which through numerous resolutions and decisions adopted here at the United Nations and in regional organizations, has repeatedly shown its determination to achieve progress in those areas.

We welcome this substantive session as well as the collective determination to examine ways and means for strengthening progress towards disarmament. We hope that our discussions and deliberations will lead to a positive outcome. We want these deliberations to be marked by realism and the resulting proposals to be imbued with a realistic approach to disarmament. We feel that other delegations gathered here share this philosophy. If we have not yet managed to achieve a satisfactory outcome or progress in disarmament, it is not because of the weakness of our working methods but because of the lack of political will by various countries to make the necessary strides towards securing international

peace and as called for in numerous United Nations documents that have emerged from disarmament-related sessions.

We are convinced, and we feel this to be a just conviction having demonstrated our sincerity through the initiative I mentioned earlier, that ways and means must be found to reactivate the United Nations disarmament machinery. Here, we agree with the remarks of the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We reaffirm the importance of pooling our efforts to promote progress within the Commission and to reform the United Nations so that we can master the complicated issues before us. With the needed management reform, we shall be in a better position to bring our collective will to bear on the creation of a constructive climate for strengthening the multilateral approach to securing international peace.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in our general exchange of views. I am sure that this exchange will serve as an excellent basis for our work in the Working Groups and in plenary meetings over the next two and a half weeks.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I remind delegations wishing to submit papers for our consideration of measures for improving the effectiveness of the Commission's methods of work to do so in good time for our meeting on Thursday, 13 April.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.